



Working Paper #3
**Global Antisemitism:
Assault on Human Rights**

Irwin Cotler
Member of Canadian Parliament
Former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Professor of Law, McGill University

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Antisemitism has become more sophisticated, globalizing, virulent and lethal. It is reminiscent of the atmospherics of the 1930s and without parallel nor precedent since the end of the Second World War. The new forms and processes of contemporary anti-Judaism overlaps with classical Antisemitism but is distinguished from it. A focal point of contemporary forms of Antisemitism is the delegitimazation and demonization of the State of Israel. This paper puts forth a conceptual and an analytical framework to examine this new and dangerous phenomena. The paper proposes a new criteria to identify and then examine, uncover and combat this global threat.

CONTENTS

Introduction: Antisemitism Old and New – Definition and Distinction	5
The State of Global Antisemitism Today: Indices of Identification	
1. State-Sanctioned Genocidal Antisemitism	6
2. Political Antisemitism: Denial of Fundamental Rights	7
3. Ideological Antisemitism: Antisemitism Under the Cover of Anti-Racism	8
4. ‘Legalized Antisemitism’: Discriminatory Treatment in the International Arena	9
5. European Antisemitism on the Rise – Including the Far Right	10
6. Cultural Antisemitism	11
7. Discrimination and Exclusion: Globalizing the Boycott	12
8. The Old/New Protocols of the Elders of Zion	13
9. The Resurgence of Global Antisemitism: Evidentiary Data	13
Conclusion	15
Bibliography	16

Global Antisemitism: Assault on Human Rights*

IRWIN COTLER

“[May I] share with you the feeling of urgency, if not, emergency, that we believe Antisemitism represents and calls for. I must confess to you, I have not felt the way I feel now since 1945. I feel there are reasons for us to be concerned, even afraid ... now is the time to mobilize the efforts of all of humanity.”

– Elie Wiesel¹

“The rise of Antisemitism anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. Thus, in fighting Antisemitism, we fight for the future of all humanity.”

– Kofi Annan²

“It is this recent intensification and escalation of Antisemitism that underpins and necessitates this International Parliamentary Coalition to confront and combat this oldest and most enduring of hatreds. Silence is not an option. The time has come not only to sound the alarm, but to act. For as history as taught us only too well, while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews.”

– Irwin Cotler

“We’re meeting because Antisemitism is on the rise. There must be a fight-back and we parliamentarians are willing to lead from the front. Jewish communities across the world should know that they are not alone ... We are proud to be joined by national leaders across the political spectrum, who stand united and ready to confront this oldest hatred in the newest of settings.”

– John Mann, MP³

*This paper was originally presented at the YIISA Seminar Series Antisemitism in Comparative Perspective in October 2006. It was further developed and presented in part in the London Conference on Combating Antisemitism in February 2009. Irwin Cotler is a Canadian MP and former Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada. He is Professor of Law (on leave) from McGill University who has written extensively on matters of hate, racism, and human rights. He is a co-founder of the International Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism with UK MP John Mann.

¹ Elie Wiesel, Remarks for *The International Commission for Combating Anti-Semitism* (ICCA), May 2002, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Anti-Semitism+and+the+Holocaust/Documents+and+communiqués/The+International+Commission+for+Combating+Anti-S.htm?DisplayMode=print>

² Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “Throughout History Anti-Semitism Unique Manifestation of Hatred, Intolerance, Persecution Says Secretary-General In Remarks To Headquarters Seminar,” Press Release Opening Remarks at the Department of Public Information (DPI) Seminar on Anti-Semitism, New York, June 21, 2004, available at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9375.doc.htm>

³ John Mann, MP, “Britain – UK Pledges to Combat Antisemitism,” *The Coordination Forum for Combating Antisemitism* (CFCA), February 17, 2009, available at: <http://www.antisemitism.org.il/eng/struggle/38660/Britain-UKpledgestocombatantisemitism>

Introduction: Antisemitism Old and New – Definition and Distinction

What we are witnessing today – and which has been developing incrementally, sometimes imperceptibly, and even indulgently, for some thirty-five years now – is a new sophisticated, globalizing, virulent and even lethal Antisemitism, reminiscent of the atmospherics of the 30s, and without parallel or precedent since the end of the Second World War.

The new anti-Jewishness overlaps with classical Antisemitism but is distinguishable from it. It found early juridical, and even institutional, expression in the United Nations' 'Zionism is Racism' resolution but has gone dramatically beyond it. This new Antisemitism almost needs a new vocabulary to define it; however, it can best be identified using a rights-based juridical perspective.

In a word, classical or traditional Antisemitism is the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon, the rights of Jews to live as equal members of whatever host society they inhabit. The new Antisemitism involves the discrimination against the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations – the denial of, and assault upon, the Jewish people's right even to live – with Israel as the 'collective Jew among the nations.'

Observing the complex intersections between the old and the new Antisemitism, and the impact of the new on the old, Per Ahlmark, former leader of the Swedish Liberal Party and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, pithily concluded:

*Compared to most previous anti-Jewish outbreaks, this [new Antisemitism] is often less directed against individual Jews. It attacks primarily the collective Jews, the State of Israel. And then such attacks start a chain reaction of assaults on individual Jews and Jewish institutions ... In the past, the most dangerous anti-Semites were those who wanted to make the world Judenrein, 'free of Jews.' Today, the most dangerous anti-Semites might be those who want to make the world Judenstaatrein, 'free of a Jewish state.'*⁴

Regrettably, indices of measurement for the new Antisemitism have yet to be developed. Indeed, this may account for the disparity between the visceral feelings of Jews and the reports of social scientists still following the old Antisemitism paradigm. According to the traditional indicators – such as discrimination against Jews in housing, education, or employment, or access for Jews to major positions in the political, economic, scientific and academic arenas – it would appear, falsely, that Antisemitism is in decline.

What follows is the missing conceptual and analytical framework – a set of eight indices – to identify, pour content into, monitor, unmask and combat this global threat whereby the new Antisemitism builds upon – and incites to – traditional hatred. We need this paradigm shift in our thinking.

Two important caveats underpin this analysis. First, none of the indicators is intended to suggest that Israel is somehow above the law, or that Israel is not to be held accountable for any violations of law. On the contrary, Israel, like any other state, is accountable for any violations of international law or human rights. The Jewish people are not entitled to any privileged protection or preference because of the particularity of Jewish suffering.

⁴ Per Ahlmark, 'Combating Old – New Antisemitism', Yad Vashem, April 11, 2002, speech at *The International Conference on the "Legacy of Holocaust Survivors,"* transcript available at: http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_yad/what_new/data_whats_new/whats_new_international_conference_ahlmark.html

Second, I am not referring to critiques – even serious critiques – of Israeli policy or Zionist ideology, however distasteful or offensive some of these critiques might sometimes be. But the converse is also true: Antisemitic critiques cannot mask themselves under the exculpatory disclaimer that ‘If I criticize Israel, they will say I am Antisemitic.’ In the words of *New York Times* commentator Thomas Friedman: “Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is vile. But singling out Israel for opprobrium and international sanctions, out of all proportion to any other party in the Middle East is Antisemitic, and not saying so is dishonest.”⁵

The State of Global Antisemitism Today: Indices of Identification

1. State-Sanctioned Genocidal Antisemitism

The first indicator – and the most lethal type of anti-Jewishness – is what I would call genocidal Antisemitism. This is not a term that I use lightly or easily; rather, I am using it in its juridical sense as set forth in the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. In particular, I am referring to the Convention’s prohibition against the ‘direct and public incitement to genocide.’⁶ If Antisemitism is the most enduring of hatreds and genocide is the most horrific of crimes, then the convergence of this genocidal intent embedded in anti-Semitic ideology is the most toxic of combinations.

There are three manifestations of this genocidal Antisemitism. The first is the state-sanctioned – indeed, state-orchestrated - genocidal Antisemitism of Ahmadinejad’s Iran. This intent is further dramatized by the parading in the streets of Teheran of a Shihab-3 missile draped in the emblem ‘Wipe Israel off the Map,’ while demonizing both the State of Israel as a ‘cancerous tumour to be excised’ and the Jewish people as ‘evil incarnate.’

A second manifestation of this genocidal Antisemitism is in the covenants and charters, platforms and policies of such terrorist movements and militias as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda, which not only call for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews wherever they may be, but also for the perpetration of acts of terror in furtherance of that objective. For instance, Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar proclaims that, “before Israel dies, it must be humiliated and degraded,” while Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has said that “If all the Jews were gathered in Israel it would be easier to kill them all at the same time.”⁷

In a lesser known, but no less defamatory and incendiary expression, Nasrallah has said that, “if we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak and feeble in psyche, mind, ideology and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew. Notice, I do not say the Israeli.” Shiite scholar Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, author of the book *Hezbollah: Politics and Religion*, argues that such statements “provide moral and ideological justification for dehumanizing the Jews.” In this view, she added ‘the Israeli Jew becomes a legitimate target for extermination and it also legitimizes attacks on non-Israeli Jews.’⁸

The third manifestation of this genocidal Antisemitism are the religious *fatwas* or execution writs, where these genocidal calls in mosques and media are held out as religious obligations, and where Jews and Judaism are characterized as the perfidious enemy of Islam. Israel emerges here not only as the collective Jew among the nations, but as the Salman Rushdie among the nations.

In a word, Israel is the only state in the world today – and the Jews the only people in

⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, “Campus Hypocrisy,” *The New York Times*, October 16, 2002, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/16/opinion/16FRIE.html>

⁶ The Genocide Convention, in Article 3, expressly prohibits the ‘direct and public incitement to genocide.’

⁷ Quoted in Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hezbollah: Politics and Religion*, Pluto Press, 2001.

⁸ Jeffrey Goldberg, “In the Party of God: Are Terrorists in Lebanon Preparing for a Larger War?” *The New Yorker*, October 14 and 21, 2002.

the world today – that are the object of a standing set of threats by governmental, religious and terrorist bodies seeking their destruction. And what is most disturbing is the seeming indifference – even the sometimes indulgence – in the face of such genocidal Antisemitism.

2. Political Antisemitism: Denial of Fundamental Rights

If genocidal Antisemitism is a public call for - or incitement to - the destruction of Israel, political Antisemitism is the denial of Israel's right to exist to begin with, or the denial of the Jewish people's right to self-determination, if not their very denial as a people. There are four manifestations of this phenomenon.

The first is the denial of the Jewish people's right to self-determination – the only right consecrated in both the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Jews are being singled-out and discriminated against when they alone are denied this right. As Martin Luther King, Jr. put it: "this is the denial to the Jews of the same right, the right to self-determination, that we accord to African nations and all other peoples of the globe. In short, it is anti-Semitism."⁹

The second feature of political Antisemitism involves denying the legitimacy, if not the existence, of the State of Israel itself. Just as classical Antisemitism was anchored in the denial of the very legitimacy of the Jewish religion, the new anti-Jewishness is anchored in the denial of the very legitimacy of the Jews as a people, as embodied by the Jewish State, Israel. In each instance, then, the essence of Antisemitism is the same – an assault upon whatever is the core of Jewish self-definition at any given moment in time – be it the Jewish religion, or Israel as the 'civil religion' or juridical expression of the Jewish people.

A third manifestation of political Antisemitism is the denial of any historical connection between the Jewish people and the State of Israel, a form of Middle East revisionism or 'memory cleansing' that seeks to extinguish or erase the Jewish people's relationship to Israel, while 'Palestinizing' or 'Islamicizing' the Arab and Muslim exclusivist claim. If 'Holocaust Revisionism' is an assault on Jewish memory and historical experience, 'Middle East Revisionism' constitutes no less of an assault on Jewish memory and historical experience. It cynically serves to invert the historical narrative so that Israel is seen an 'alien' and 'colonial implant' in the region that 'usurped' the Palestinian homeland – leading to the conclusion that its people are a 'criminal' group of nomadic Jews whose very presence 'defiles' Islam, and must be expurgated.

It is not surprising that this revisionist Middle East narrative should lead to the final variant of political Antisemitism: the 'demonizing' of Israel, or the attribution to Israel of all the evils of the world. This is the contemporary analogue to the medieval indictment of the Jew as the 'poisoner of the wells,' as Israel – portrayed as *the* metaphor for a human rights violator – is indicted as the 'poisoner of the international wells' with no right to exist.

Distinguished British jurist Anthony Julius, often understated in his characterization and critique of Antisemitism, summed it up as follows:

To maintain that the very existence of Israel is without legitimacy, and to contemplate with equanimity the certain catastrophe of its dismantling, [...] is to embrace – however unintentionally, and notwithstanding all protestations to the contrary – a kind of Antisemitism indistinguishable in its compass and its consequences from practically any that has yet been inflicted on Jews.¹⁰

⁹ Martin Luther King, Jr., quoted in Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Socialism of Fools: The Left, the Jews and Israel," *Encounter*, December 1969, page 24. See also: John Lewis, "I Have a Dream for Peace in the Middle East: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Special Bond with Israel," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 21, 2002, text available at: http://www.upjf.org/detail.do?noArticle=1796&noCat=127&id_key=127

¹⁰ Anthony Julius, "Don't Panic," *The Guardian*, February 1, 2002, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/feb/01/britishidentity.features11>

3. Ideological Antisemitism: Antisemitism Under the Cover of Anti-Racism

While the first two indicators are overt, public and clearly demonstrable, ideological Antisemitism is much more sophisticated and arguably a more pernicious expression of the new Antisemitism. Indeed, it may even serve as an 'ideological' support system for the first two indicators, though these are prejudicial and pernicious enough indicators in their own right.

Here, ideological Antisemitism finds expression not in any genocidal incitement against Jews and Israel, or overt racist denial of the Jewish people and Israel's right to be; rather, ideological Antisemitism disguises itself as part of the struggle *against* racism. Indeed, it marches under the protective cover of the UN and the international struggle against racism.

The first manifestation of this ideological Antisemitism was its institutional and juridical anchorage in the 'Zionism is Racism' resolution at the UN, a resolution that, as the late US Senator Daniel Moynihan said, "gave the abomination of Antisemitism the appearance of international legal sanction." Notwithstanding the fact that there was a formal repeal of this resolution, 'Zionism as Racism' remains alive and well in the global arena, particularly in the campus cultures of North America and Europe, as confirmed by the recent British All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism.

The second manifestation is the indictment of Israel as an apartheid state. This involves more than the simple indictment of Israel as an apartheid state. It also involves the call for the *dismantling* of Israel as an apartheid state as evidenced by the events at the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism in Durban. This indictment is not limited to talk about divestment – it is about the actual dismantling of Israel based upon the notion of apartheid as a crime against humanity.

The third manifestation of ideological Antisemitism involves the characterization of Israel not only as an apartheid state – and one that must be dismantled as part of the struggle against racism – but as a Nazi one.

And so it is then that Israel is delegitimized – if not demonized – by the ascription to it of the two most scurrilous indictments of twentieth-century racism – Nazism and apartheid – the embodiment of all evil.

These very labels of Zionism and Israel as 'racist, apartheid, and Nazi' supply the criminal indictment. No further debate is required. The conviction that this 'triple racism' warrants the dismantling of Israel as a moral obligation has been secured. For who would deny that a 'racist, apartheid, Nazi' state should not have any right to exist today? What is more, this characterization allows for terrorist 'resistance' to be deemed justifiable – after all, such a situation is portrayed as nothing other than *occupation et résistance*, where 'resistance' against a racist, apartheid, Nazi occupying state is legitimate, if not mandatory.

There is no more dramatic example of the danger of the 'Nazification' of Israel and the inflammatory inversion of the Holocaust than the dual demonizing indictments arising from the recent Israel-Hamas conflict. On the one hand, Jews are blamed for perpetrating a Holocaust on the Palestinians, as in the appalling statement of Norwegian diplomat Trine Lilleng that "The grandchildren of Holocaust survivors are doing to the Palestinians exactly what was done to them by Nazi Germany."¹¹ On the other hand, crowds are incited to another Holocaust against the Jews, as in the chants of protesters who scream 'Hamas! Hamas! Jews to the gas!'

What is so disturbing about this ideological Antisemitism is not simply the use of these defamatory and delegitimizing indictments to call for the dismantling of the Jewish State itself, but in particular the masking of this ideological Antisemitism as if it were part of the struggle against racism, apartheid and Nazism, thereby transforming an Antisemitic indictment into a moral imperative with the imprimatur of international law.

¹¹ Etgar Lefkowitz, "Norwegian envoy equates Israel with Nazis," *Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2009.

4. 'Legalized Antisemitism': Discriminatory Treatment in the International Arena

If ideological Antisemitism seeks to mask itself under the banner of anti-racism, this fourth indicator of the new anti-Jewishness - legalized Antisemitism- is even more sophisticated and insidious. Here, Antisemitism simultaneously seeks to mask itself under the banner of human rights, to invoke the authority of international law, and to operate under the protective cover of the UN. In a word – and in an inversion of human rights, language and law – the singling-out of Israel and the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena is 'legalized.'

The first case study is the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism in Durban, which became the 'tipping point' for the emergence of a new anti-Jewishness. Those of us who witnessed the 'Durban Speak' festival of hate in its declarations, incantations, pamphlets, and marches – seeing Antisemitism marching under the cover of human rights – have forever been transformed by this experience. 'Durban' is now part of our everyday lexicon as a metaphor for racism and Antisemitism.

It should have been otherwise. Indeed, when Durban was first proposed some ten years ago, I was among those who greeted it with anticipation, if not excitement. And yet what happened at Durban was truly Orwellian.¹² A World Conference Against Racism turned into a conference of racism against Israel and the Jewish people. A conference intended to commemorate the dismantling of South Africa as an apartheid state resonated with the call for the dismantling of Israel as an apartheid state. A conference dedicated to the promotion of human rights as the new secular religion of our time, singled-out Israel as the meta-human rights violator of our day – indeed – as the new anti-Christ of our time. A conference that was to speak in the name of humanity ended up as a metaphor for hate and inhumanity. Never have I witnessed the kind of virulence and intensity of anti-Jewishness – mockingly marching under the banner of human rights – as I found in the festival of hate at Durban.

Another example of legalized Antisemitism occurred annually for over 35 years at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The importance of the Commission's work derived from the fact that the UN exerts enormous influence around the world.

Yet, this influential body consistently began its annual session with Israel being the only country singled-out for country-specific indictment – even before the deliberations started – the whole in breach of the UN's own procedures and principles.¹³ In this 'Alice in Wonderland' situation, the conviction and sentence were pronounced even before the hearings commenced. Some thirty percent of all the resolutions passed at the Commission were indictments of Israel.

It was a hopeful sign when a Reform Panel of eminent persons appointed by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to the Commission's "eroding credibility and professionalism" and "legitimacy deficit that casts doubts on the overall reputation of the United Nations."¹⁴ But after the Commission was replaced in June 2006 by the UN Human Rights Council, the new body proceeded to condemn one member state – Israel – in eighty percent of its twenty-five country-specific resolutions, while the major human rights violators of our time enjoyed exculpatory immunity. Indeed, five special sessions, two fact-finding missions, and a high level commission of inquiry have been devoted to a single purpose: the singling-out of Israel.¹⁵

¹² I have documented this elsewhere in my writings.

¹³ See Gregg J. Rickman, "Contemporary Global Antisemitism: A Report Provided to the United States Congress," United States Department of State, p. 50 & 51: "Resolutions with Negative Country-Specific References (2001-2007)" and "Resolutions Criticizing Countries' Human Rights Records (2001-2007)," (March 2008), available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/102301.pdf>

¹⁴ "A more secure world: Our shared responsibility," report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations (2004), available at: <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

¹⁵ See also Hillel C. Neuer, "Statement at a Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations of the Committee on International Relations – House of Representatives," Serial No. 109-221, September 6, 2006.

These case studies are not the only examples of the international 'legal' character of the new Antisemitism. Indeed, an entire paper - if not book - can be devoted to the systematic, if not systemic, denial to Israel and the Jewish people of equality before the law and international due process in the international arena. The tragedy is that all this is taking place under the protective cover of the UN, thereby undermining international law and human rights. The fact is that there have been more resolutions adopted, committees formed, deliberations held, speeches made, and resources expended in the condemnation of Israel than on any other state, or combination of states.

5. European Antisemitism on the Rise – Including the Far Right

In speaking of European Antisemitism, I do not wish to suggest that Europe – or any of its countries – is Antisemitic. On the contrary, Europe as a whole is committed to the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. But the documentary record in Europe since the dawn of the new millennium suggests that we are witnessing a serious rise of Antisemitism in Europe almost without parallel or precedent since the Second World War.

Over much of the past decade, governments, international institutions, and NGOs have noted an increase in Antisemitic incidents including attacks on Jewish people, property, community institutions, and religious facilities. For example, Resolution 1563 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted that "far from having been eliminated, Antisemitism is today on the rise in Europe. It appears in a variety of forms and is becoming relatively commonplace."¹⁶

During my visits to European capitals these past eight years I can personally attest to some of the following events that occurred, all of which were reported upon in the media during these visits:

- Physical assaults upon, and desecration of, synagogues, cemeteries and Jewish institutions;
- Desecration of Holocaust memorials, as in Slovakia, where Jewish memorials were desecrated in what an official described as 'the biggest attack on the Jewish community since the Holocaust;'
- Attacks upon identifiable Jews, be they orthodox Jews, or Jews wearing a skullcap or Star of David, or other visible Jewish symbols;
- Convergence of the extreme left and the extreme right in public demonstrations calling for 'death to the Jews;'
- Atrocity propaganda against Israel and Jews, for example, that Israel injects the AIDS virus into Palestinians, as well as the demonizing Nazi and Holocaust metaphors;
- The ugly canard of double loyalty, where in the words of Professor Joel Kotek, of the University of Brussels: 'One's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict has become a test of loyalty. Should he express solidarity with Israel he becomes a supporter of a Nazi state;'¹⁷ and
- The belief – by close to fifty percent of Europeans – that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their own country and where more than one-third believe Jews have 'too much power' in business and finance.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Resolution 1563: Combating Antisemitism in Europe," *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* (2007), available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/ERES1563.htm>

¹⁷ Daniel Ben Simon, "Haunted by ill winds of the past," *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper*, January 2, 2002.

¹⁸ "ADL Survey in Seven European Countries Finds Anti-Semitic Attitudes Steady; 31 Percent Blame Jews for Financial Crisis," *Anti-Defamation League*, New York, February 10, 2009.

As discussed throughout this paper, there has been an emergence of a new global and virulent Antisemitism. It is important also to make note of the strong resurgence of extreme right wing groups, particularly throughout Europe. Extreme nationalist parties in some European countries have begun to use – and successfully – Antisemitic slogans and ideas that were previously deemed unacceptable. This Antisemitism has even become a central campaign platform by combining anti-Jewish epithets with a broader message of hatred and exclusion, which has resulted in violent, hateful and both anti-Jewish and anti-immigrant public demonstrations.

The overt and conscious Antisemitism of the old Neo-Nazi groups is easily identified, and yet it still exists – and thrives – in contemporary society. In the Netherlands, the *Racism and Extremism Monitor* observed that the contribution of extreme right-wing participants to racial violence as a whole – particularly incidents of Antisemitism – has risen sharply from 38 incidents in 2005 to 67 in 2006 and is continuing to increase at an exponential rate. “Loosely organized extreme right-wing groups,” including informal movements of right-wing young people (often termed ‘Lonsdale youth’ or skinheads), and neo-Nazi groups are reportedly gaining ground and influence.¹⁹

In its November 2007 report, the Dutch monitoring organization Centre Documentation and Information on Israel expressed concern with the numerous incidents reported on the anniversary of the German surrender in 1945 - May 4 and 5 – during which Holocaust monuments were defaced or destroyed. These actions were seen to be directly related to the rise of the extreme right, with memorials covered with hate symbols such as swastikas and neo-Nazi slogans. In another example, on December 8, 2007, supporters of the Freedom Party and the Patriots of Ukraine organization took part in a torchlight march through Kiev, chanting Antisemitic, anti-immigrant, and pro-white power slogans, including ‘one race, one nation, one motherland,’²⁰ frighteningly reminiscent of the hateful slogans of Nazi Germany.

In a response to changing circumstances and challenges, many right-wing groups have transformed their approaches as a means to incorporate the old, traditional form of Antisemitism into the new, more tolerable Antisemitism. Antisemitic adherents of the far right seek to portray their views as anti-Zionist or anti-Israel, on the grounds that this is more politically acceptable than open advocacy of Nazi positions. For instance, in its 2007 annual report on Antisemitism, the League for Human Rights of B’nai Brith Canada cites a bulletin of the neo-Nazi website *Stormfront*, imploring followers to ‘remember to say ‘Zionists’ or ‘Israeli Firsters’ instead of ‘Jews’ when making public speeches or writing articles.’ In this way, the radical right makes explicit the convergence of the old/new Antisemitism that remains unspoken in other contexts.

6. Cultural Antisemitism

Cultural Antisemitism refers to the *melange* of attitudes, sentiments, innuendo and the like in academia, in Parliaments, among the literati, public intellectuals, and the human rights movement - in a word, *la trahison des cleres*. As UK MP Denis MacShane put it, “The most worrying discovery is that anti-Jewish sentiment is entering the mainstream, appearing in everyday conversations of people who consider themselves neither racist nor prejudiced.”²¹

Such Antisemitic attitudes include: the remarks of the French Ambassador to the UK questioning why the world should risk another world war because of “that shitty little country Israel;”²² the observation of Petronella Wyatt that, “Antisemitism is respectable

¹⁹ “2008 Hate Crime Survey: Antisemitism,” *Human Rights First*, available at: <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination/pages.aspx?id=157>

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ UK Labour MP Denis MacShane, Chair of the 2006 UK *All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry Into Antisemitism*, as quoted in *The Guardian* on September 7, 2006.

²² “‘Anti-Semitic’ French envoy under fire,” BBC Online, December 20, 2001, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1721172.stm>

once more, not just in Germany or Catholic-central Europe, but at London dinner tables;²³ the distinguished British novelist A.N. Wilson dredging up another ugly canard in accusing the Israeli army of “the poisoning of water supplies;”²⁴ Tom Paulin, Oxford Professor and poet, writing of a Palestinian boy “gunned down by the Zionist SS;”²⁵ or Peter Hain, a former Minister in the British Foreign Office, stating that the present Zionist state is by definition racist and will have to be dismantled.

Indeed, according to the US State Department Report on Contemporary Antisemitism, drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis is increasingly commonplace in intellectual circles, as illustrated by the frequent media images of Israel as a ‘Nazi-state’ during the July 2006 war with Hezbollah,²⁶ as well as during the more recent war in Gaza, wherein repeated reference was made at the UN Human Rights Council to the ‘Holocaust perpetrated by the Israelis;’ while ADL head Abraham Foxman said “This is the worst, the most intense, the most global that it’s been in most of our memories” citing “an epidemic, a pandemic of anti-Semitism.”²⁷

In summary, Antisemitism appears to be ‘the right and only word,’ in the words of Gabriel Schoenfeld, for a cultural Antisemitism ‘so one-sided, so eager to indict Israel while exculpating Israel’s adversaries, so shamefully adroit in the use of moral double standards, so quick to issue false and baseless accusations and so disposed to invert the language of the Holocaust and to paint Israelis and Jews as evil incarnate.’²⁸ That was six years ago, even before the present pandemic.

7. Discrimination and Exclusion: Globalizing the Boycott

There is a growing incidence of academic, university, trade union and related boycotts and divestments – whose effect in practice, if not in intent – is the singling-out of Israel, Israeli Jews and supporters of Israel for selective opprobrium and exclusion. Indeed, what began as a UK phenomenon has now become a global one – with universities, organizations, and unions from South Africa to Canada, Norway to the United States, and from Turkey to Italy – moving from the boycott of Israeli goods and services to restrictions and bans on Israeli academics. As the UK All-Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism reported: ‘The singling-out of Israel is of concern. Boycotts have not been suggested against other countries...The discourse around the boycott debate is also cause for concern, as it moved beyond reasonable criticism into anti-Semitic demonization of Israel.’²⁹

Labour MP John Mann, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism, stressed the motion’s discriminatory character against British Jews: “boycotts do nothing to bring about peace and reconciliation in the Middle East but leave Jewish students, academics and their associates isolated and victimized on university campuses.”³⁰

²³ Petronella Wyatt, “Poisonous Prejudice,” in *Spectator*, December 8, 2001, available at: <http://www.spectator.co.uk/the-magazine/cartoons/9580/poisonous-prejudice.html>

²⁴ A. N. Wilson, “A demo we can’t afford to ignore,” *Evening Standard*, April 15, 2002.

²⁵ Tom Paulin, “Killed in Crossfire,” *The Observer*, February 18, 2001.

²⁶ This upsurge was documented in the U.S. Department of State’s 2006 annual “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,” available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/index.htm>; as well as its 2006 annual “Report on International Religious Freedom,” available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/index.htm>

²⁷ Rabbi Levi Brackman & Rivkah Lubitch, “ADL sees ‘pandemic of anti-Semitism,’” *Jewish World, Y-net News*: February 7, 2009, available at: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3667928.00.html>

²⁸ Gabriel Schoenfeld, “Israel and the Anti-Semites,” *Commentary Magazine* (June 2002), available at: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/israel-and-the-anti-semmites-9468?search=1>

²⁹ “Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism,” *All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism* (September 2006), p. 41, pts. 210 & 211, available at: <http://www.thepcaa.org/report.html>

³⁰ Jonny Paul, “Ex-EU Official Condemns UK Academic Boycott Call,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 1, 2008, available at: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1212041440272>

8. The Old/New Protocols of the Elders of Zion

For over one hundred years, the world has been suffused with the most pervasive, persistent and pernicious group libel in history, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – the tsarist forgery proclaiming an ‘international Jewish conspiracy’ bent on ‘world domination.’ Today, the ‘lie that wouldn’t die’³¹ now underpins the most outrageous of international conspiracy thinking and incitement targeting first Jews and then the ‘international Zionist conspiracy.’

So it is, then, that Jews were behind the 9/11 attacks and had forewarning; Jewish doctors are held responsible for inculcating Palestinians with the AIDS virus; that Jewish scientists are responsible for the propagation of the Avian flu; that a Jewish astronaut is responsible for the explosion of the Columbia space shuttle; that the Jews were behind the publication of the Danish cartoons and the Pope’s defilement of Islam; that Jews are responsible for the war in Iraq; that the ‘genocides’ such as in Darfur are orchestrated by the Jews, and so on.

It was not long before the same libelous inheritance from the Jews was transferred to the Jews of Israel – to the international Zionist conspiracy – bringing together the old and new protocols in a conceptual and linguistic symmetry that blamed Israel and Zionists for all the above things that were once blamed on the Jew.

But it is in the Arab and Muslim world that the Protocols have taken hold, not unlike the incitement of the anti-Jewish pogroms in tsarist Russia, or the murders of the Third Reich. The Protocols are propagated in mosques; taught in schools; published by states; sold in bookstores; and, most compellingly, have secured a captive audience in the daily broadcasting media.

9. The Resurgence of Global Antisemitism: Evidentiary Data

The data unsurprisingly confirm that Antisemitic incidents are very much on the rise. Still, the available figures only show half the picture – they demonstrate an increase in this old/new Antisemitism by concentrating on the traditional Antisemitic paradigm targeting individual Jews and Jewish institutions, while failing to consider the new Antisemitic paradigm targeting Israel as the Jew among nations and the fall-out from it for traditional Antisemitism. This caveat is important – for the rise in traditional Antisemitism cannot be viewed solely in the context of the traditional paradigm. Rather, the rise in traditional Antisemitism should be seen as a complement to – and consequence of – the rise in the new Antisemitism, insidiously buoyed by a climate receptive to attacks on Jews because of the attacks on the Jewish state.

- For instance, a trend can be noted in the statistical data of an rise in Antisemitic incidents correlating with the situation in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Data from the 2007 Report of Tel Aviv University’s Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism illustrate an upsurge in violence and related Antisemitic crimes in the years 2000 and 2006 that correspond with the beginning of the Second Intifada and the Israel-Hezbollah War.³² More recent reports, such as from the ADL, have shown a major increase in anti-Jewish and anti-Israel attacks and demonstrations since the recent 2009 Israel-Hamas war, which have even been characterized as a “pandemic.”³³

³¹ Hadassah ben-Itto, *The Lie that Wouldn’t Die – A Hundred Years of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing, (1998), pp. 338-339.

³² Dina Porat & Esther Webman (eds.) “Antisemitism Worldwide 2007: General Analysis,” The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University (in cooperation with the World Jewish Congress), available at: <http://www.tau.ac.il/Antisemitism/>

³³ *Ibid*, p. 33.

- The 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll noted that the percent of people polled with an unfavourable view of Jews in various Muslim countries was exceptionally high. In Egypt it was as high as ninety-seven percent and in Jordan ninety-eight percent.³⁴
- In 2007, overall levels of violent Antisemitic attacks against persons increased in Canada, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom according to official statistics and reports of nongovernmental monitors. Indeed, there is a trend that Antisemitic incidents increasingly take the form of physical attacks on individuals; a “constant pressure to conceal one’s [Jewish] identity” has been noted, while Jewish leaders have been singled out for violence.³⁵
- A disturbing number of victims of Antisemitic attack are school students. Children and young people have been assaulted and threatened in the streets, on public transport, and even in and around their schools. Physical assaults have taken place in France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States; children on playgrounds have been pelted with stones. With respect to universities, Jewish students and student centers, dormitories and Jewish clubs have been assaulted.³⁶ For example, just days ago, one hundred anti-Israel activists descended upon the York University Hillel student club shouting slogans such as “Zionism is racism,” threatening and intimidating Jewish students.³⁷
- Jewish institutions have been particularly susceptible to attacks as “centers of Jewish life became the main targets for those seeking to express their hatred and strike a symbolic blow against Jews as a people.”³⁸ Synagogues, cemeteries and/or Holocaust memorials have been reported vandalized and desecrated in no less than 26 different countries.³⁹
- The report from Human Rights First noted that “in some countries, the frequency and severity of attacks on Jewish places of worship, community centers, schools, and other institutions resulted in a need for security measures by representatives of both the Jewish community and local or national government.” The human rights NGO credited such “enhanced security” – and not a decrease in anti-Semitic sentiment – with reducing serious attacks, commenting that “the reality in which such protection is required on an everyday basis is, however, perhaps the truest indicator of just how far the revival of Antisemitism has progressed since 2000.”⁴⁰
- In 2007, 1,042 Antisemitic incidents were reported to the League for Human Rights of B’nai Brith Canada, constituting an overall increase of 11.4% from the previous year. A five-year view shows that the number of incidents has almost doubled since 584 incidents were reported in 2003, while a ten-year view shows a dramatic upward trend with incidents multiplying more than four-fold since 1998, when there were 240 reported cases.⁴¹

³⁴ 2005 to 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll on Anti-Semitic Attitudes in Selected Muslim Countries, Available at: <http://pewresearch.org>

³⁵ “2008 Hate Crime Survey: I. Antisemitism,” *Human Rights First*, available at: <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination/reports.aspx?s=antisemitism&p=index>

³⁶ Porat & Webman, p. 25.

³⁷ Jonathan Blake Karoly, “An eyewitness account of this week’s aggressive intimidation of Jewish students at York University,” (posted by Jonathan Kay), *The National Post*, February 12, 2009, available at: <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2009/02/12/an-eyewitness-account-of-this-week-s-aggressive-intimidation-of-jewish-students-at-york-university.aspx>

³⁸ Porat & Webman, p. 33.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Klein & Bromberg, “2007 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents: Patterns of Prejudice in Canada,” *League for Human Rights of B’nai Brith Canada*, p. 2.

CONCLUSION

The thesis of this paper, global Antisemitism as an assault on human rights, is that we are witnessing today an old/new escalating, sophisticated, global, virulent, and even lethal Antisemitism. In its benign (if it can be called benign) form the old/new Antisemitism refers to increased hostility towards and attacks on: Jewish people and property, and Jewish communal, educational and religious institutions; 'the mendacious, dehumanizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews or the powers of Jews as a collective';⁴² Holocaust denial and inversion; conspiracy theories where Jews and Israel are blamed as 'poisoners of the wells'; boycotts of Jews and Israeli nationals; accusations of dual loyalty; and the singling-out of Israel and the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena, and denial of fundamental rights.

In its more virulent and lethal form it refers to the delegitimization and demonization of the Jewish people – of the emergence of Israel as the collective Jews among the nations – and to state-sanctioned genocidal Antisemitism which constitutes a contemporary warrant for genocide.

It is this escalation and intensification of Antisemitism that underpins – indeed, necessitates the need to understand, confront and combat this oldest and most enduring of hatreds. Silence is not an option. The time has come not only to sound the alarm – but to act. For as history has taught us only too well: while it may begin with Jews, it does not end with Jews. Antisemitism is the canary in the mineshaft of evil, and it threatens us all.

⁴² As stated by the European Monitoring Center of Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), in Gregg J. Rickman, "Contemporary Global Antisemitism: A Report Provided to the United States Congress," United States Department of State, p. 19.

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